

REGIONAL FORUM

ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UNECE REGION

29 – 30 MARCH 2023 | HYBRID EVENT | GENEVA & ONLINE



SIDE EVENT CONCEPT NOTE

Event title

Slow drip or complete dropout? Ensuring sustainable access to water and sanitation for Roma and other Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (CDWD) in informal settlements and beyond.

Background and Rationale

More than 260 million people are part of communities discriminated against based on work and descent. Such communities face discrimination, distinction, exclusion or restriction based on ancestral status and occupation. In the European and North-American context, Roma peoples are an example of communities discriminated on work and descent (CDWD). Findings from the EU Minorities and Discrimination survey carried out in 2016 show that 1 in every 3 Roma live in housing without safe drinking water.

Connections to water supply systems remain particularly low for the Roma community. In Romania, which has the highest proportion of Roma peoples in Europe, 68% of Roma households do not have access to potable water.

In 2016, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, Mr Leo Heller, found that "...throughout several States and regions where safe water supply and sanitation services are available to almost every household, Roma populations are systemically disadvantaged in their access to these services".

Sub-standard housing conditions and systemic disparities in access to healthcare mean that Roma communities are particularly exposed to communicable diseases arising from inadequate sanitation conditions. In the context of SDG 6 which calls for universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene facilities for all by 2030, the international community must step up to ensure that the communities that face the most discrimination, stigma and marginalisation in access to basic services are not left behind.

Session objectives and expected outcomes

Progress will be shared and solutions to ongoing obstacles highlighted focusing on achieving SDG 6 amongst communities discriminated against based on work and descent (DWD) in Europe, North America and CDWD diaspora representatives in North America.

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Through testimony from Roma representatives from Slovakia and Albania and a representative from the Haratin community from Mauretania, residing in the United States, and a diaspora representative from Japan's Buraku community, the event will present the achievements and structural barriers to fully achieve SDG 6 in particular the rappelling effects of marginalization and informal and irregular settlements.

TBC A representative from a local authority will share their own struggles to ensure the right to water and access to sanitation is transformed into action and the obstacles encountered when taking into account the shifting and complex social and cultural realities on the ground.

TBC Welcoming words from the UN Special Rapporteur on water and sanitation and a diplomatic representative from Spain will open the event and set the tone for a constructive and solution based discussion.

Organizers

Lead organizers: Rural Development Centre,

Contributors: ERGO Network, The Inclusivity Project, Permanent Mission of Spain to the UN in New York (TBC)

Agenda and Structure

Welcome Remarks

- Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations in New York, Ambassador Agustín Santos Maraver (TBC)

Keynote

- UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, Mr. Pedro Arrojo-Agudo (TBC)

Panel Discussion

Moderation & Q&A with audience by Mr. Paul Divakar Namala, Executive Director, The Inclusivity Project, Convenor, GFOD

- Ms. Brisilda Taco from Albania, Roma Activist and CDWD Rights Expert for the European Roma Grassroots Organisation Network (ERGO)
- Mr. Alioune S. Mzeirigue African (Mauretania) diaspora based in the New York, USA
- Ms. Risa Kunimoto, (USA/Japan), CDWD Rights Expert from the Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent (GFOD)

Closing Remarks

- TBC

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List of Panellists

Mr. Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation (TBC)

His Excellency Ambassador Agustín Santos Maraver, Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations in New York (TBC)

Ms. Brisilda Taco (Albania), ERGO Network

Mr. Alioune S. Mzeirigue, (Mauretania/United States)

Ms. Annamária Pšenková, (Slovakia), ERGO Network

Sign-up / Registration Link

Please provide us with the link people can use to sign-up / register for your event.

[https://theinclusivityproject-
org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0tdOypqTMpE9YAHuonSpHmW3xO6HyhkVff](https://theinclusivityproject-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0tdOypqTMpE9YAHuonSpHmW3xO6HyhkVff)